

Nature & You

News and Events from the Missouri Department of Conservation • November/December 2013



What lurks beneath the rocks?

Hellbenders are imperiled and need our help to survive.

The Ozarks are known for fast, clear rivers that are fun for canoeing, fishing and swimming. However there is more there than meets the eye. The streams and rivers of Missouri support a diverse community of wildlife. The story of the Ozark hellbender is associated with habitat destruction, water quality degradation and chemical contamination. This harmless aquatic creature is declining at an alarming rate and needs our help to survive.

Although they look strange, hellbenders are unique and ancient aquatic salamanders that reside in the streams and rivers of Missouri. Adults can range between 11 and 20 inches long, with the record being 29 inches. With their wide, flat head, tiny eyes and flat body hellbenders are well adapted to life under river rocks. The folds of skin along

their sides help them take oxygen from the water. Missouri and a small portion of Arkansas are the only states to have both the eastern and the Ozark hellbenders. While the eastern hellbender can be found in several states, the Ozark hellbender is only found in south central Missouri.

Hellbenders require cool, clear, unpolluted water with rocky riffles and large flat rocks or bedrock with openings for shelter. These shy animals come out at night and mainly feed on crayfish. Hellbenders are an indicator of the health of our streams and rivers. If there is something in the water that could be harmful to them, it could also affect us as well. Substantial efforts are being taken to investigate the decline hellbenders as well as efforts to save this species from extinction.

Can we save it? Come and learn about the largest salamander in North America at 7 p.m. on Nov. 19 at the Discovery Center. Jeff Briggler, a MDC herpetologist, can help you sort fact from fiction about these extraordinary creatures and learn ways in which you can help this critical species survive.

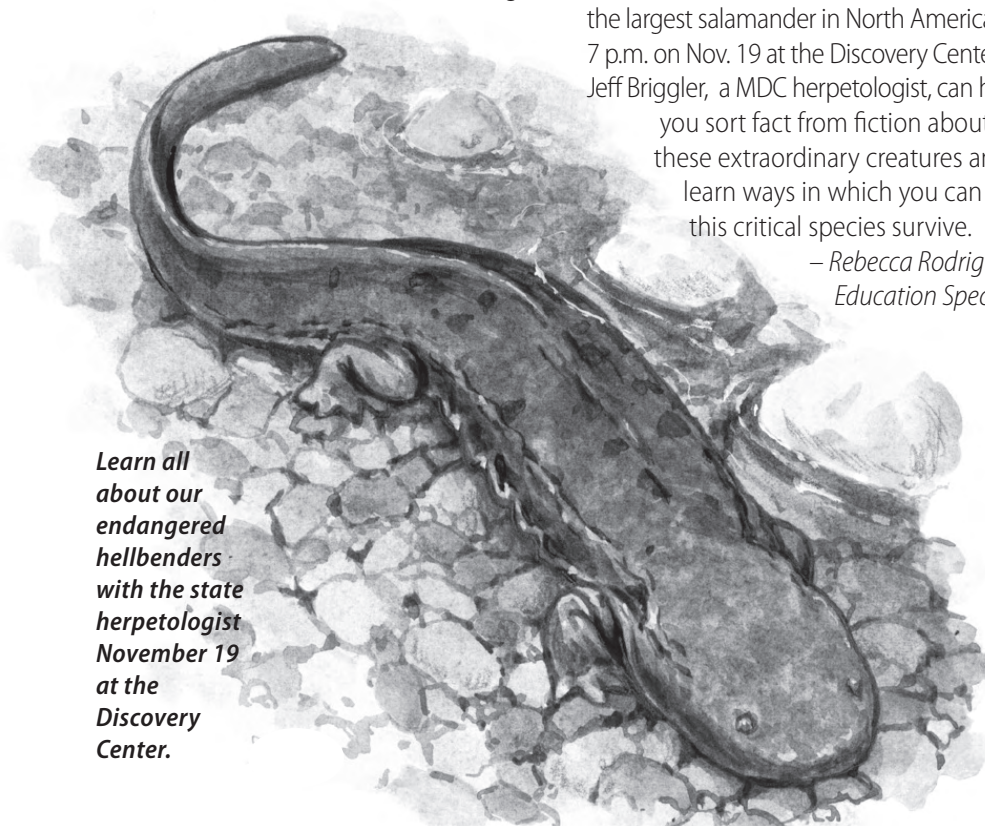
— Rebecca Rodriguez,
Education Specialist

Learn all about our endangered hellbenders with the state herpetologist November 19 at the Discovery Center.

Cool facts about Ozark Hellbenders

This harmless aquatic salamander has an unusual name. The name, "hellbender", probably came from the appearance of this creature. One rendition says settlers thought "it was a creature from hell where it's bent on returning". Another version says the undulating skin of a hellbender reminded observers of "horrible tortures of the infernal regions".

- Hellbenders are thought to have evolved about six million years ago.
- Giant salamanders, the hellbender's closest relatives, live in the mountain streams in Japan and southeastern China. They can grow nearly five feet long and weigh more than 100 pounds.
- Hellbenders can live 25 to 30 years in the wild.
- It takes five to eight years for them to reach sexually maturity.
- The side of their bodies provide surface area for respiration.
- Another aquatic salamander, the mudpuppy, is often misidentified as a hellbender. Although they look similar, the mudpuppy has external gills and does not have folds of skin along the body.



Burr Oak Woods Conservation Nature Center

1401 NW Park Road, Blue Springs, MO 64015 • mdc.mo.gov/node/280



Located in Blue Springs, Missouri, one mile north of I-70 and one mile west of MO 7 on Park Road. Six trails, 1,071 wooded acres, two picnic areas, indoor wildlife viewing area, 3,000 gallon native fish and turtle aquarium, hands-on nature exhibits, gift shop, and sales of fishing and hunting permits.

NATURE CENTER HOURS:

Tuesday–Friday: 7 AM–6 PM

Saturday: 8 AM–5 PM

AREA AND TRAILS:

Daily: 7 AM–6 PM

Daylight Saving Time: 7 AM–8 PM

Closed Thanksgiving Day, day after

Thanksgiving, Christmas and New Years

TO REGISTER FOR A PROGRAM:

Programs are free. Call 816-228-3766 to sign up for a program requiring registration on or after the first business day of that month. If you are unable to attend a program, please call and cancel as a courtesy.

What's for Dinner?

Wednesdays & Saturdays • 3 PM

Walk-in (all ages)

Discover what's for dinner at Burr Oak Woods as the captive amphibians, fish and turtles enjoy their feast every Wednesday and Saturday. The snakes are fed every other Friday (November 1 & 15 and December 13 & 27).

Native Flower "Clay Bead" Jewelry

November 2 • Saturday • Noon–2 PM

Registration began October 1 (adults)

Create a unique wearable work of art with acrylic clay as a set of earrings, a necklace pendant, hair clip or a brooch. Learn about some of Missouri's beautiful and essential native plants as you craft your jewelry from one of many basic flower shapes...flowering dogwood, rose mallow, sunflower, downy gentian and more.

Cooking Wild: Venison

November 9 • Saturday • 1–2:30 PM

Registration required (adults)

It is deer season, and for many Missourians, that means fun, outdoor adventure and a freezer full of venison! Venison is organic, low in fat and absolutely delicious. Join us as we dig in to some great recipes including sausage, jerky and other tasty treats. What's your favorite venison recipe?

Babes in the Woods:

Leaf Leaping

November 12 • Tuesday • 11 AM–Noon

Registration required (babes under 36 months)

There is nothing quite like the scent of fall and shuffling through autumn leaves. Join the fun as we play in a forest blanketed by colorful fallen leaves. This adventure is sure to help connect you and your little one to nature.

Conservation Kids Club:

Letterboxing

November 12 • Tuesday • 6:30–8 PM

Registration required (ages 7–13)

We will turn an autumn evening hike into a treasure hunt! Letterboxing is a great way to get outside and explore beautiful places, while learning how to navigate with a map and compass.

Little Acorns: Turkey Time

November 13 • Wednesday • 10–11 AM or 1–2 PM

November 23 • Saturday • 10–11 AM

Registration required (ages 3–5)

It's that time of year again when we see turkeys everywhere! Come learn about these celebrated birds, then set out to get an up-close look at the wild turkeys as they make their way through the forest.

Home School: Home Is Where the Habitat Is

November 13 • Wednesday • 10–11:30 AM

for ages 6–8, 9–11, 12–18 or 1–2:30 PM

for ages 6–8 *Registration required*

Every animal and plant has a place called home and we call those places habitats. Join us to explore a few of Missouri's amazing & diverse habitats to find out what makes them home, sweet home for so many creatures.

Raptors: Predators of the Sky

November 16 • Saturday • 10–11 AM

No registration required (all ages)

Fall is a great time to view raptors in



Missouri.

Learn about their unique hunting abilities and other adaptations that help make them top predators of the sky.

Wild Ones: Nuts to You

November 19 • Tuesday • 1–3 PM

Registration required (adults)

Discover the delicious nut producing trees native to Missouri. These same trees are essential to the very survival of some of our wild residents. Investigate tasty, nutritious treats that you can prepare for your own family while learning how wise use ensures enough for our wild families as well.

Rockin' & Readin' Nature Tales

November 30 • Saturday • 11 AM–Noon

December 28 • Saturday • 11 AM–Noon

Walk-in (ages 2+)

Join us for a story hour as we lead you on fantastic nature adventures! We will meet butterflies, birds, mammals and all sorts of magnificent creatures! We will cross rivers, discover mysteries within the forest and fly across the prairies. Our imaginations are the only limits.

Fall Fashion

November 23 • Saturday • 1–2 PM

Registration required (all ages)

Shuffle and kick your way through the fallen leaves, gathering a few to be imprinted on



your personal t-shirt. Soon you'll be able to display what's sure to be the most natural and vibrant addition to your closet!

PUBLIC NOTICE: Managed Muzzleloader Deer Hunt: December 9, 10 & 11 • 5:30 AM–6:30 PM • Burr Oak Woods Conservation Area, including roadways and trails, will be closed to all pedestrian traffic. Bicycling, hiking, and/or walking will not be permitted on the area. The main road will remain open to vehicular traffic only to the Nature Center.

Winter Backyard Birds

November 30 • Saturday • 1–2:30 PM

Registration required (all ages)

Now that you have had your fill of Thanksgiving dinner, let's give a feast to your backyard neighbors. Local birds come in droves to backyard feeders in winter. Learn how to identify them by sight & sound and settle in for a lovely winter of bird viewing with your very own simple feeder.

Wreath Making

December 7 • Saturday • 12:30–2:30 PM

Registration begins Nov. 1 (ages 14+) ages

14–17 must make a wreath with an adult.

Bring the sweet smell of cedar and pine into your home during the holidays by creating a personalized wreath. We will provide evergreens, dried native grasses, pine cones, and other natural embellishments. Please bring a small wire frame wreath as a base for your creation.

Big Year 2013 at Burr Oak Woods

December 7 • Saturday • 10–11 AM

Walk-in (all ages)

Can you believe that it has already been a year? A Big Year is a competition where bird lovers attempt to collect the most birds sighted in one single year. Come find out who the Burr Oak Woods Big Year winner will be! Discover secrets that will help you to build your life list for 2014!

Eagle Days at Squaw Creek

December 8 • Sunday • 8 AM–5 PM

Registration required (all ages)

Let's end the Burr Oak Woods Big Year with a bash at Squaw Creek National Wildlife Refuge! Catch a ride with Burr Oak Woods up to Mound City to view our majestic national symbol in the wild. As many as 300 bald eagles migrate through the area at this time of year.

Kids Craft Day

December 14 • Saturday • 10 AM–1 PM

No registration required (all ages)

Kids Craft Day is a great way to make the holidays special. Make one-of-a-kind natural gifts to give to the people you love this holiday season. Don't forget to create your own gift wrap before you leave!

Conservation Kids Club: Night Tree

December 17 • Tuesday • 6:30–8 PM

Registration required (ages 7–13)

Create a new holiday tradition this year, as we create edible decorations for the wild winter residents of Burr Oak Woods. We will venture out into the night forest to garnish a tree especially for them. We will conclude our evening with stories and hot chocolate.

Little Acorns: Elk, Elk, Moose

December 18 • Wednesday • 10–11 AM or 1–2 PM

December 21 • Saturday • 10–11 AM

Registration required (ages 3–5)

Will you ever see a moose roaming the hills of Missouri? Probably not, but you can see elk now! With elk being brought back to Missouri we will get to know these larger cousins of deer a little better.



Home School: Extinct, Endangered and Recovered

December 18 • Wednesday • 10–11:30 AM

for ages 6–8, 9–11, 12–18 or 1–2:30 PM for ages 6–8

Registration required

Missouri is home to some amazing plants and animals. Unfortunately some of them are in danger of disappearing forever, and for a few it is already too late. Join us as we take a look at some endangered and extinct species. We will also find out about some of the success stories of recovered species right here in Missouri.

Winter Solstice Hike

December 21 • Saturday • 1–2 PM

No registration required (ages 5+)

The weather is cold, the leaves are gone and the grass is brown. Does that mean we can't enjoy the outdoors? Of course not! Before you hibernate from outdoor activities come out to Burr Oak Woods. What better way to kick off the first day of winter than with a hike!

Nature Film Festival

December 28 • Saturday • 9 AM–3 PM

No registration required (all ages)

Join us once again for an end of the year film festival! This year we are featuring the wonderful fish, forests and wildlife found right here in Missouri. We will also be showing other nature movies and short documentaries throughout the day. Sit back and enjoy these spectacular films.

The Burr Oak Woods Games

December 31 • Tuesday • 8 AM–4:30 PM

Registration required (ages 8+)

Don't be stuck inside all week. If you love to be outdoors, and would like to learn new skills, then join us on your Christmas vacation for a real adventure. You have been selected to participate in the fun-filled Burr Oak Woods Games. Your training will include Wilderness Survival, In Search of Food and Water, Finding Your Way, Tracking, Archery and Primitive Hunting Skills. After roasting a hotdog for lunch, put your new skills to use in the Burr Oak Woods Nature Arena. May the odds be ever in your favor.

Burr Oak Woods offers volunteer training

Do you have a love of nature and want to share it with others? If so, Burr Oak Woods is looking for you!

We will host a volunteer training course beginning in February 2014. This 30-hour class will help prepare you to assist with many different opportunities at Burr Oak Woods including interpretive programs, special events, outdoor skills, animal care, native landscaping and more.

We are currently accepting applications for the 2014 training course for adults and for the youth volunteer program open to ages 14 and up. To apply, please stop by Burr Oak Woods or contact Rebecca Miller at 816-228-3766 no later than Dec. 31, 2013.

Lake City Shooting Range and Outdoor Education Center

28505 E. Truman Road, Landahl Park, Buckner, MO 64016 • mdc.mo.gov/node/282



Located on 60 acres of forests and fields near Blue Springs, Missouri, six miles north of I-70 on MO 7 and two miles east of MO 7 on Truman Road in Landahl Park. Facilities include an outdoor education center, archery, pistol, rifle and shotgun ranges, including skeet and trap.

HOURS:

May 1–September 15

Wednesday–Sunday: Noon–6 PM

September 16–April 30

Wednesday–Sunday: Noon–4:30 PM

Closed Monday and Tuesday

and all state holidays.

FACILITIES AND FEES: Available for individual or group use. Call for information and possible restrictions.

- Rifle/pistol range: \$3 booth per hour
- Trap/Skeet: \$3 per round per person
- Archery range: \$3 per person per hour

TO REGISTER FOR A PROGRAM:

Programs are free. Call 816-249-3194 to sign up for a program requiring registration. If you are unable to attend a program, please call and cancel as a courtesy.

Cable Restraint Certification

November 1 · Friday · 6–9:30 PM

Registration required (all ages)

If you are a trapper looking for another tool to help you on the trapping line; then you might want to explore cable restraint. The course of instructions includes general history of cable restraint, rules and regulations, length of season, and more. This class is a requirement to trap with the cable restraint technique and certification will appear on your Resident Trapping Permit. This class will fill quickly.

Basic Handgun

November 22 · Friday · 6–9:30 PM

Registration required (ages 18+)

This is a novice class for people who have little or no experience in handling and shooting a handgun. Topics that will be covered include safety in the home, types of handguns, different parts of the handgun, the variety of calibers, ammunition and marksmanship. Class includes range time.

Refuse to Be a Victim- NRA Course

December 7 · Saturday · 8 AM–Noon

Registration required (adult)

Refuse to Be a Victim is a nationally recognized crime prevention program, developed by the National Rifle Association that promotes awareness and prevention of criminal attack. Topics covered include: home, automobile, phone, technological, travel and personal security.

Basic Shotgunning

December 11 · Wednesday · 9–11 AM

Registration required (ages 12+)

This is a novice class for people who have little or no experience in handling and shooting a shotgun. Topics that will be covered include safety, parts of shotgun, gauges of shotguns, shot shells, patterning your shotgun and shooting techniques. Class includes range time.

Introduction to Skeet Shooting

December 14 · Saturday · 9–11:30 AM

Registration required (ages 12+)

Tired of trap shooting and looking for a quicker game? Why not try skeet shooting? Skeet shooting is a great way to improve your basic shotgun skills and improve your hit ration on all types of winged game. You may even pick up a new sport at the same time.



How to hunt wary, late season deer

Late season deer hunting can be a real challenge. There are a couple of things a hunter can do to improve success in the field during late season hunts. One technique is to use a cover up scent, also known as scent blockers. This reduces the presence of a human scent in the woods and helps maintain hunter concealment. Deer become more wary of human scent the more they encounter hunters in the woods.

Another important point is being aware of food sources for deer. Food becomes harder to find as autumn



and winter progress. Deer need to generate more body heat in the colder months, which is directly related to their quantity

of food intake as well as the quality of food. In late season, deer will look for food in relatively close proximity to their normal winter ranging area. Much of what deer find while scavenging is usually left over crops in the fields such as a corn, bean or wheat. Later in the year, the deer tend to bed right on the edge of the field to minimize the amount of energy they will have to spend getting to the food source. Knowing that deer are close to their food source in the winter months can help you pick the perfect area to set up your tree stand or blind to harvest that late season deer. Good hunting!

– Justin Kleithermes,
Range Assistant

Remembering November...

For me, November and December have always been about spending quality time with family and friends. In my family those two months seem to contain more birthdays than all the other months combined. Combine that with the Thanksgiving and Christmas holidays and there are plenty of reasons to get together. Aside from the birthdays and holidays, November and December will always hold a special spot on my calendar because of the bounty of nature as well.

In today's fast paced world it is often difficult to slow down and make time for family and friends. Outdoor pursuits for deer, upland birds, waterfowl and other game have offered me the opportunity to slow down. The result is that I now have many cherished memories of days spent afield. Those memories include time spent afield with loved ones lost, memories of good times, memories of not so good times, lessons learned and adventures. Even after the passing of many years, I can still vividly recall the facial expressions of good people in my life during those "milestone" moments. I could fill the pages of a lengthy book with stories of friends that somehow enriched my life.

I encourage you, in whatever your pursuits, to slow down and make this November the one to remember. Make some time to get outside and enjoy the bounty that nature has to offer you. Don't know where to start? MDC can help you discover nature. We offer a full line up of classes, seminars, workshops and certifications to help you out. For a full listing, check out www.mdc.mo.gov

— Nathan Woodland,
Parma Woods Range Supervisor

Canada Goose Hunting Seminar

November 20 · Wednesday · 6–8 PM
Registration required (all ages)
Hunting the Canada goose is a great way to enjoy a day afield. An added benefit is that geese provide excellent table fare when properly prepared. Join our instructors for an evening all about geese. Topics of discussion will include goose biology, hunting strategies, calls, calling and more.



Field to Freezer

November 23 · Saturday · 9 AM–4 PM
Registration required (all ages)
Harvesting a big game animal is just the beginning of the work in providing a quality meat product to your family. More and more hunters are choosing to process their own animals due to the rising costs associated with commercial processing. You might be surprised how easy it is. Join our experienced staff as we journey through a simple, yet efficient method of deer processing.

Sausage and Jerky Making

December 11 · Wednesday · 6–8 PM
Registration required (all ages)
With a few simple tools it's easy to make great sausage and jerky. Whether you are just thinking about giving it a try, or a seasoned veteran to making jerky and sausage; you will benefit from this class. During this class we'll show you some of the equipment options then take you through the basic processes of making different sausages and jerky. We might even give you a recipe or two.



Located in Platte County, Missouri. Go west of downtown Parkville on Route FF to River Road, then west 3 miles to the entrance located just west of I-435. Facilities are available for individual or group use and include a rifle/pistol range, shotgun patterning range, and archery range.

HOURS:

May 1–September 30

Monday and Tuesday: 2 PM–8 PM

Friday–Sunday: 10 AM–4 PM

October 1–April 30

Friday–Tuesday: Noon–4:30 PM

Closed Wednesday and Thursday and all state holidays.

FACILITIES AND FEES:

- Rifle/pistol range: \$3 booth per hour
- Archery range: \$3 per person per hour

TO REGISTER FOR A PROGRAM:

Programs are free. Call 816-891-9941 to sign up for a program requiring registration. If you are unable to attend a program, please call and cancel as a courtesy to those on the waiting list.

Introduction to Muzzleloaders

December 15 · Sunday · 8 AM–Noon
Registration required (ages 11+; ages 11–17 must be accompanied by an adult)
Shooting a modern muzzleloader is safe, fun and can help extend your hunting season. In this class, our certified instructors will teach you everything you need to know to get started using them today. Course topics will include the various equipment options, muzzleloader safety, shooting fundamentals and more.

Anita B. Gorman **Discovery Center**

4750 Troost Avenue, Kansas City, MO 64110 • mdc.mo.gov/discoverycenter



Located in Kansas City, Missouri, just east of the Plaza near 47th and Troost. Six hands-on workshops explore Missouri's fish, forest and wildlife with a Lewis and Clark theme. Discovery Center is a showcase for environmental architecture with four acres of native landscaping. Buy books and hunting/fishing permits at the gift shop.

HOURS:

Monday–Friday: 8 AM–5 PM
1st and 3rd Tuesdays: 8 AM–9 PM
1st and 3rd Saturdays: 9 AM–4 PM
Closed all state holidays.

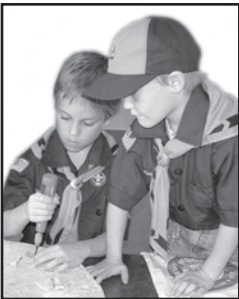
TO REGISTER FOR A PROGRAM:

Programs are free. Call 816-759-7300 to sign up for a program requiring registration.

Scout Discovery Day

November 2 · Saturday · 10 AM–2:30 PM
Walk-in (all ages)

Girls, Boys, Brownies, Cubs, Cadets and Webelos – join us for a day of hands-on activities designed for fun and rank achievement. We'll have stations set up for you to learn new skills and achieve conservation badge requirements. Explore the life of animals and plants that call Missouri home. Try your hand at



a new skill such as tree identification, knot tying, fire starting, compass orienteering and more. Both individual scouts and troops are welcome. Don't miss out on the fun this Scout Discovery Day!

Nature Nuts Storytime

November 2 · Saturday · 10–11 AM or 1–2 PM
November 16 · Saturday · 10–11 AM or 1–2 PM
Walk-in (ages 3–8; all welcome)

Join volunteer naturalists for a fantastic journey through forests, streams and other magical places as they read select books. Children will participate in a hands-on nature activity.

Scout Program

November 5 · Tuesday · Evening
December 3 · Tuesday · Evening
Registration required (scouts)

Scout leaders, are you lacking expertise or equipment to complete conservation badges? Education Specialist staff will provide a program helping your scouts with rank achievement. All Missouri scout groups of 10–24 participants are welcome to schedule a free program. Please contact Wendy Parrett at **(816) 759-7305 ext. 1141** or Wendy.Parrett@mdc.mo.gov to schedule an evening program on the first Tuesday evening of the month.

Turkey Tales

November 16 · Saturday · 10 AM–2:30 PM
Walk-in (all ages)

Gobble up some fun learning about the season's most popular bird. Make a turkey hat, a homemade turkey call or a turkey track gift bag for the holidays.

In the News! The Hellbender: Can We Save It?

November 19 · Tuesday
6:30 PM Reception; 7 PM Program
No registration required (adults; ages 14+ are welcome with an adult participant)

Hellbenders have been around for more than six million years and keeping these unique endangered aquatic amphibians in Missouri is important. These wonderful, but strange looking creatures serve as a major indicator of the overall health of our streams and rivers. Join us for a presentation with MDC Herpetologist Jeff Briggler as he addresses the concerns, conservation efforts and the future of the Hellbender. A reception with light hors d'oeuvres will start at 6:30 p.m. followed by the presentation at 7:00 p.m.



Holiday Greenings

December 7 · Saturday · 10 AM–2:30 PM
Walk-in (all ages)

Thinking of making the holidays a little greener this season? Nature provides many materials that can be used to make colorful ornaments that provide our trees and homes with seasonal decorations. Explore and experiment with the many material options available right outside the door. Fashion a festive swag to hang using prairie grasses, wild nuts, berries and seeds.

Nature Nuts Storytime

December 7 · Saturday · 10–11 AM or 1–2 PM
December 21 · Saturday · 10–11 AM or 1–2 PM
Walk-in (ages 3–8; all welcome)

Join volunteer naturalists for a fantastic journey through forests, streams and other magical places as they read select books. Children will participate in a hands-on nature activity.

Discovery Center Volunteer Appreciation

December 17 · Tuesday
Discovery Center is honoring our volunteers tonight, so there will be no public programs.

Whooo's in your Backyard?

December 21 · Saturday · 10 AM–2:30 PM
Walk-in (all ages)

Of the 18 owl species native to North America, eight live in Missouri or visit here. Discover how to identify owls by their calls, shapes and field markings. Put your owl knowledge to work as you create your own recycled owl and apply your scientific skills as you investigate an owl's food chain. After learning about owls, test your knowledge by challenging a friend to our Owl-ology game.

Anita B. Gorman **Discovery Center**

4750 Troost Avenue, Kansas City, MO 64110 • mdc.mo.gov/discoverycenter

Eyes on Owls

December 21 • Saturday • 1 PM

No registration required (all ages)

Join us as for a hooting good time as we bring to you a live owl presentation from



our friends at Lakeside Nature Center. A naturalist will share information unique to owls and allow you to get a closer look at one of our fascinating birds.

Nature Printmaking

December 26 & 27 • Thursday & Friday • 10 AM–1 PM

Walk-in (all ages)

Looking for some creative nature fun following the holidays? Learn about Missouri trees while creating your own colorful leaf print using leaves and ink. This along with other hands-on activities will help brighten your spirit.

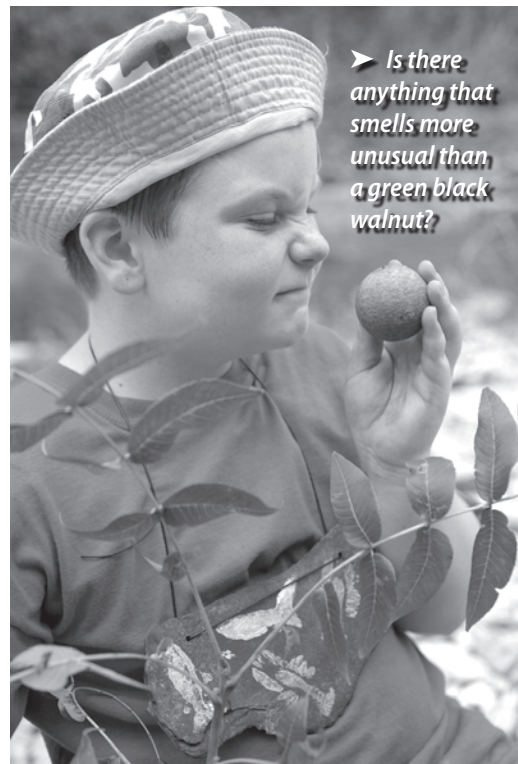
nature & art

Trail Camera Wildlife Photography Exhibit

Missouri is home to many wild animals that are elusive and seldom seem, which is why they are also fascinating. We sent a request out to our conservation area managers to send us their best examples of “wildlife photos” taken exclusively with hidden trail cameras. And what a collection we have from the Plaza coyote to Ozark mountain lions and black bears. The Trail Camera Wildlife photo exhibit will be on display at the Anita B. Gorman Discovery Center through December.

Missouri's MVT (*Most Valuable Tree*)

The second grade students wrinkle their noses with a yuk as a nature center naturalist passes around a handful of crumpled black walnut leaves for their inspection. One student exclaims that the leaves don't smell bad – the leaves just smell weird! If you've ever picked up a black walnut still in its green husk, you can probably relate to the fragrance.



➤ *Is there anything that smells more unusual than a green black walnut?*

regal moth whose larvae feed on the leaves.

The tree's scientific name is *Juglans nigra*. Juglan is from the Latin *Jovis glans*, meaning “acorn or nut of Jove (of the god Jupiter). So the walnut is literally known as the nut of the gods. *Nigra* means black and refers to the dark wood prized by furniture makers.

Of all the native nut trees in Missouri, black walnut is the most valuable to man. Walnut lumber and nuts are important forest crops in the state. The dark rich wood has been prized by furniture makers since colonial times. For gunstocks, walnut is unsurpassed since no other wood has less jar or recoil; it never warps or shrinks; it is light in proportion to its strength; and never splinters.

In the forest, the home of the black walnut is in deep rich soils of bottomland forests. In America's primeval forests, walnuts used to reach heights of 150 feet, with a trunk six feet in diameter. Those trees are long gone, but the Discovery Center is home to several fine specimens that are possibly descendants of the original bottomland forest of Brush Creek.

If you've ever helped gather walnuts in the fall, your hands were probably stained dark brown from the juglone in the rotting husks. In pioneer times, the husks and leaves were used to produce dark brown ink dye for quill pens, fabric and gray hair.

To learn more about walnuts, hickories and other forest nuts, check out these programs: *Wild Ones, Nuts to You*, Nov. 19 at Burr Oak Woods and *Turkey Tales*, Nov. 16 at the Discovery Center.

– Pat Whalen,
Education Specialist

Nothing quite smells like the leaves and fruits of the black walnut. The peculiar fragrance comes from a chemical called *juglone* that is found in the leaves, roots and husks of the nuts. The chemical actually inhibits the growth of other plants and trees near the walnut tree. Many vegetable gardeners know not to plant tomatoes near a walnut tree.

Despite its lethal reputation with fellow trees, the black walnut is actually quite valuable to man and wildlife. Squirrels store and feed on the nuts, while the tree is the preferred host of the luna moth and

Paintings from Nature



Diana Werts received a Master's Degree in Painting at Emporia State University in 1987. She then taught at the Wichita Art Museum, the Nelson-Atkins Museum of Art, at Bishop Miege High School in Roeland Park, Kansas and in her private studio. Her natural surroundings including the Flint Hills of Kansas and the prairies of Missouri influence her colorful oil paintings. "I hope to inspire the viewer to think of the grasses and plants as reliable friends, always available for silent conversation." Join Diana for a meet and greet 3 to 5 p.m. on Saturday, Nov. 2.

HOLIDAY CLOSURES

**Discovery Center, Parma Woods
and Lake City Shooting Ranges**
will be closed

Veteran's Day, November 11
Thanksgiving Day, November 28
Christmas Day, December 25
New Years Day, January 1

Burr Oak Woods
will be closed

Thanksgiving Day, November 28
Thanksgiving Friday, November 29
Christmas Day, December 25
New Years Day, January 1

*"Missourians care
about conserving forests,
fish and wildlife."*

What's **HOT** in the **NATURE SHOP!**

\$7
ON SALE OCT. 1ST



Mother Nature is always up to something.
Let the Natural Events Calendar be your guide
to what's going on throughout the year.

Eagle Days

**SQUAW CREEK
NATIONAL
WILDLIFE REFUGE
DECEMBER 7 & 8**

If you've never seen a bald eagle in the wild, then what are you waiting for? You don't need to go to Alaska or the Great Lakes. Missouri is the winter home to thousands of bald eagles migrating from northern states. Open waterways for fishing and a taste for migrating waterfowl make our state a winter haven for eagles. Special activities and spotting scopes will be set up for your eagle viewing pleasure. See a live eagle up close presented by Dickerson Park Zoo on the hour Saturday 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. and Sunday 11 a.m. to 3 p.m. Squaw Creek NWR is located 90 miles north of Kansas City near Mound City, Mo. For more information, check for Eagle Days events at www.mdc.mo.gov